

AMENDMENT

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 1-8 without prejudice. Please rewrite claims 9-12 from dependent claims to independent claims. Please amend claims 13 and 15. Added texts are shown in underline and deleted are shown as stricken text. Finally, please add new claims 17-26.

1-8 (Cancelled)

9. (Rewritten) A method of for promoting the healing of damaged tissue in a patient in need of such treatment, comprising:

exposing the damaged tissue, which is surrounded by an air impermeable wound cover, to an effective amount of gaseous nitric oxide for a period of time that exceeds eight consecutive hours;

allowing at least a portion of the gaseous nitric oxide to contact the air adjacent to the air impermeable wound cover through the air impermeable wound cover; and

~~The method of claim 1 further comprising pretreatment step of exposing~~ pretreating the damaged tissue ~~to~~ with an agent in combination with gaseous nitric oxide in order to enhance its effectiveness and/or absorption.

10. (Rewritten) A method of for promoting the healing of damaged tissue in a patient in need of such treatment, comprising:

exposing the damaged tissue, which is surrounded by an air impermeable wound cover, to an effective amount of gaseous nitric oxide for a period of time that exceeds eight consecutive hours;

allowing at least a portion of the gaseous nitric oxide to contact the air adjacent to the air impermeable wound cover through the air impermeable wound cover; and

~~The method of claim 1 further comprising posttreatment step of~~ wetting, dampening, or moistening the damaged tissue following gaseous nitric oxide therapy.

11. (Rewritten) A method of for promoting the healing of damaged tissue in a patient in need of such treatment, comprising:

exposing the damaged tissue, which is surrounded by an air impermeable wound cover, to an effective amount of gaseous nitric oxide for a period of time that exceeds eight consecutive hours;

allowing at least a portion of the gaseous nitric oxide to contact the air adjacent to the air impermeable wound cover through the air impermeable wound cover; and

~~The method of claim 1 further comprising posttreatment step of~~ posttreating the damaged tissue by applying a wound healing agent in combination to gaseous nitric oxide therapy.

12. (Rewritten) A method of for promoting the healing of damaged tissue in a patient in need of such treatment, comprising:

exposing the damaged tissue, which is surrounded by an air impermeable wound cover, to an effective amount of gaseous nitric oxide for a period of time that exceeds eight consecutive hours;

allowing at least a portion of the gaseous nitric oxide to contact the air adjacent to the air impermeable wound cover through the air impermeable wound cover; and

~~The method of claim 1 further comprising posttreatment step of exposing~~ posttreating the damaged tissue to with an agent in combination with gaseous nitric oxide in order to enhance its effectiveness and/or absorption.

13. (Amend) A method of for promoting the healing of damaged tissue in a patient in need of such treatment, comprising:

exposing the damaged tissue, which is surrounded by an air impermeable wound cover, to an effective amount of gaseous nitric oxide for a period of time that exceeds eight consecutive hours;
and

~~The method of claim 1 further comprising the administration of~~ administering exogenous nitric oxide to tissue flap and surrounding damaged area in order to promote flap viability and increase local blood flow to donated tissue.

14. (Original) A method for promoting the healing of damaged tissue in a patient in need of such treatment, comprising:

spraying, from a spray container, the damaged tissue with an effective amount of gaseous nitric oxide; and

allowing the gaseous nitric oxide to contact the air adjacent to the damaged tissue.

15. (Amended) A method for promoting the healing of damaged tissue in a patient in need of such treatment, comprising:

exposing the damaged tissue, which is surrounded by an air impermeable wound cover, to an effective amount of gaseous nitric oxide ~~for a period of time that exceeds eight consecutive hours;~~

pretreating the damaged tissue with a wound healing agent other than gaseous nitric oxide.

16. (Original) A method for promoting the healing of damaged tissue in a patient in need of such treatment, comprising:

exposing the damaged tissue, which is surrounded by an air impermeable wound cover, to an effective amount of gaseous nitric oxide and other gases which contain oxygen for a period of time.

17. (New) The method of claim 9 wherein the air impermeable wound cover is transparent and allows for permeation of small molecules, while simultaneously preventing microbial contamination of the damaged tissue from a source outside of the wound cover.

18. (New) The method of claim 9 wherein the effective amount of gaseous nitric oxide ranges from 20-1000 ppm.

19. (New) The method of claim 18 wherein the effective amount of gaseous nitric oxide is at least 200 ppm.
20. (New) The method of claim 18 wherein the effective amount of gaseous nitric oxide is at least 400 ppm.
21. (New) The method of claim 9 wherein the step of pretreating the damaged tissue comprises exposing the damaged tissue directly to the agent in combination with gaseous nitric oxide.
22. (New) The method of claim 9 wherein the step of pretreating the damaged tissue comprises administering an agent to the patient that indirectly enhance the local amount of nitric oxide.
23. (New) The method of claim 16, wherein the damaged tissue is selected from the group consisting of muscle, ligament, tendon, skin, bone, and cornea.
24. (New) The method of claim 16 wherein the damaged tissue is damaged by surgical incisions, trauma, and pathological processes.
25. (New) The method of claim 16 wherein the effective amount of nitric oxide is at least 200 ppm.
26. (New) The method of claim 16 wherein the effective amount of nitric oxide is at least 400 ppm.